

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 10 and 19 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A human eye detection method comprising the following steps:

- a) inputting an image;
- b) analyzing the image and getting a candidate eye area;
- c) determining a ~~neighborhood~~ region in the image of the candidate eye area based on the candidate eye area, said ~~neighborhood~~ region being a region encompassing the candidate eye area and the center of said region being the center of the candidate eye area;
- d) calculating the ~~neighborhood~~ region's size, which is recorded as S;
- e) detecting dark areas in the ~~neighborhood~~ region and counting the number of dark areas, which number is recorded as N; and
- f) comparing the ratio N/S to a predetermined first threshold $[[;]]$, wherein if the ratio N/S is smaller than said first threshold, the candidate eye area is judged to be a real eye area; else, the candidate eye area is judged to be a false eye area.

2. (Previously Presented) The human eye detection method according to claim 1, characterized in that the method further comprises the step of:

determining candidate face areas on the basis of said judged candidate eye area obtained from said step f).

3-4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously Presented) The human eye detection method according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that, step e), executes a binarization processing for detecting the dark areas.

6-7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) The human eye detection method according to claim 1 or 2, further comprising a threshold calculating step before the step f), for calculating said first threshold.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A human eye detection apparatus comprising:
an input unit that inputs an image; and
a processor that (i) analyzes the image to obtain a candidate eye area; (ii) determines a neighborhood region in the image of the candidate eye area, ~~the neighborhood-region~~ based on the candidate eye area being a region encompassing the candidate eye area and the center of said region being the center of the candidate eye area, (iii) calculates the ~~neighborhood-region's~~ size S, (iv) detects dark areas in the ~~neighborhood-region~~ and determines the total count N of dark areas in the neighborhood region, (v) and compares the ratio N/S to a predetermined first threshold, wherein if the ratio N/S is smaller than ~~the~~ the first threshold, the candidate eye area is judged to be a real eye area, else the candidate eye area is judged to be a false eye area .

11. (Previously Presented) A human eye detection apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein said processor executes a binarization processing to detect the dark areas.

12-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium embodying program codes for causing an apparatus to perform a human eye detection method comprising:

inputting an image;

analyzing the image and getting a candidate eye area;

determining a ~~neighborhood~~-region based on the candidate eye area in the image of the candidate eye area, the ~~neighborhood~~-region being a region encompassing the candidate eye area and the center of said region being the center of the candidate eye area;

calculating the ~~neighborhood~~-region's size, which is recorded as S;

detecting dark areas in the ~~neighborhood~~-region and counting the number of dark areas, which number is recorded as N; and

comparing the ratio N/S to a predetermined first threshold, wherein if the ratio N/S is smaller than the first threshold, the candidate eye area is judged to be a real eye area, else the candidate eye area is judged to be a false eye area.

20. (Canceled)